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SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT T. LINCOLN

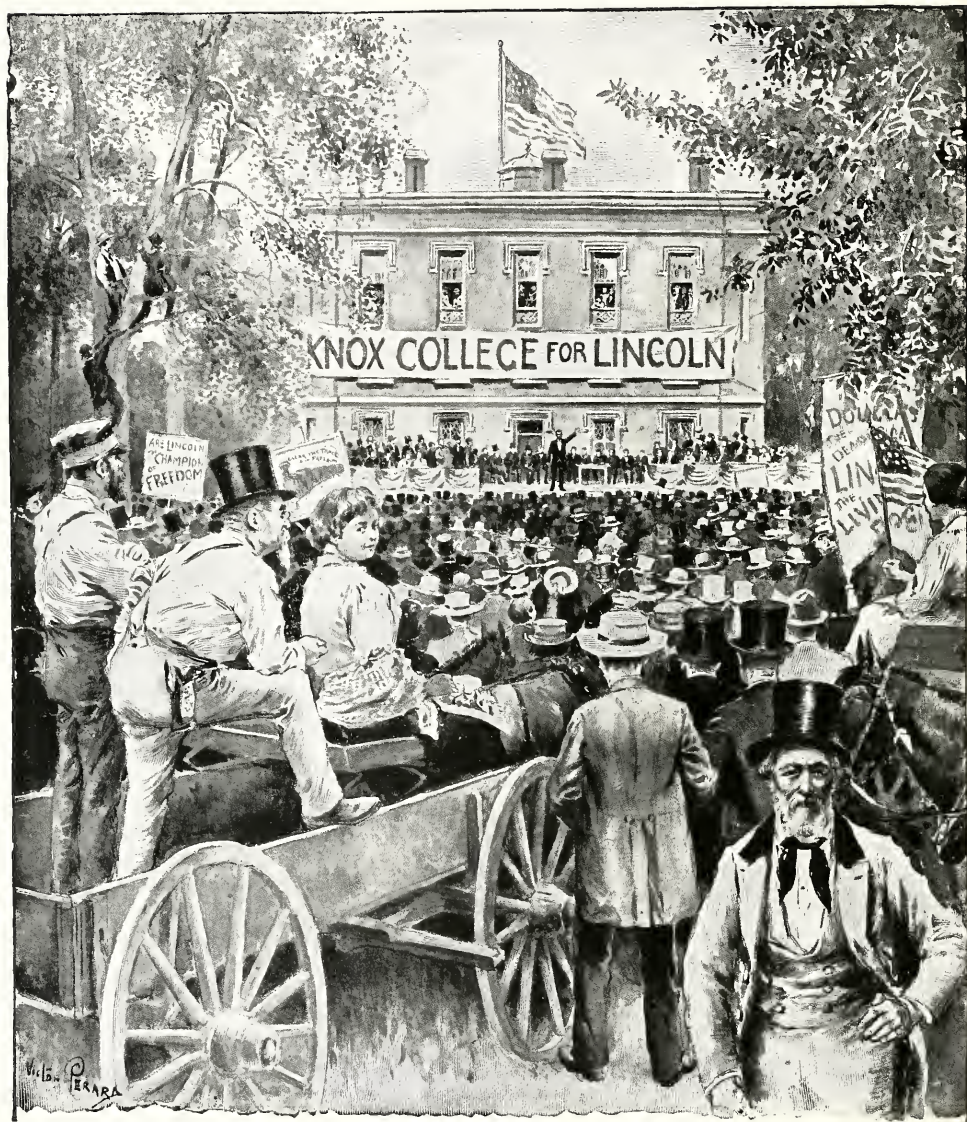
MADE AT THE CELEBRATION
OF THE

THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

GALESBURG, ILL., OCTOBER 7, 1896

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No. 9



Robert T. Lincoln's Address

The fifth of the famous debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas was held in Galesburg, Ill., October 7, 1858. The Hon. James Knox presided.


On October 7, 1896, the 38th anniversary of the debate was celebrated at Knox College, on which occasion John H. Finley, president of Knox College, presided. The programme included an address of welcome by Hon. Clark E. Carr; greeting from the schools, Dr. C. E. Nash; anniversary oration, Hon. Chauncey M. Depew; address, Hon. Robert T. Lincoln; address, S. S. McClure; address, Frank Hamlin, Esq.; unveiling memorial tablet, Ellen Boyden Finley; unveiling address, Hon. John M. Palmer.

Robert T. Lincoln said: "On an occasion of this peculiar significance it would suit me far better to be a listener or to give you hearty assurance of the grateful emotions that overcome me on witnessing this demonstration of respect for my father. He knew that here he had many sympathizing friends, but what would have been his feelings could he have known that after nearly forty years, after his work was done over thirty years, there would come together such a multitude as this to do him

honor! It is for others and not for me to say, I will give expression to but a few thoughts.

The issues of 1858 have long been settled. My father called the struggle one between right and wrong. In spite of the great odds against him he battled on, sustained by conscience and supported by the idea that when the fogs cleared away the people would be found on the side of right.

He was right, and to-day not a man could be found who would not resist the evil against which he protested. This should give us confidence in our battle against the evils of our own times. Now, as then, there can be but one supreme issue, that between right and wrong. In our country there are no ruling classes. The right to direct public affairs according to his might and influence and conscience belongs to the humblest as well as to the greatest. The elections represent the judgments of individual voters. Perhaps at times one vote can destroy or make the country's prosperity for thirty years. The power of the people, by their judgments expressed through the ballot box, to shape their own destinies, sometimes makes one tremble. But it is times of danger, critical moments, which bring into action the high moral quality of the citizenship of America. The people are always true. They are always right, and I have an abiding faith they will remain so."



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